



September 25, 2018

Mayor Weinberger
City Hall
149 Church St
Burlington, VT 05401

Dear Mayor Weinberger,

The Burlington Cemetery Commission is contacting you in an effort to get reacquainted. In this letter we hope to provide an overview of our on-going mission to preserve the past, manage the present, and plan for the future of Burlington's cemeteries: Lakeview, Greenmount, and Elmwood.

Over the past few years city reorganizational efforts have sought to eliminate the Cemetery Commission. This resulted in the commission being relegated to a sub set of the Parks Commission, limiting our ability to access funding and have our voice heard within the bigger picture of the Parks Department. The Cemetery Commission is hoping to level the playing field. Our goal is to make you and the City Council aware of our need for city resources to further our current plan of action and ensure that the perpetual care of our city cemeteries continues in the future.

Lakeview Cemetery is a place of beauty and serenity steeped in history. We aim to preserve the original Victorian garden style design and historical interments dating back to the mid-1800s. Our concerns extend to interment opportunities and options for residents of Burlington which are becoming limited and outdated at Lakeview. To that end we wish to secure funding to update Lakeview's master plan layout for section 6 and capital expenditures for this area. An amount of \$10,000-25,000 is needed for this project. Additionally, a request has been forwarded to the Planning and Zoning Office seeking a new South End cemetery as part of Plan BTV. In doing so we hope to address the future needs of the city, changing burial trends, and the ever-expanding diversity of Burlington's burial needs.

Many area cemeteries are experiencing short falls in their perpetual care funds. They struggle with limited funding for capital improvements including plantings, headstone repairs, cremation vaults, and infrastructure repairs. Burlington is no exception. The commission has seen increased inquiries for financial assistance and sites for indigent members of the community. The commission would like to begin a capital campaign to increase our endowment. We require more monies for capital improvements, assisting impoverished patrons, and preserving the Louisa Howard Chapel, outbuildings, and other cemetery features.

The Parks Commission and department have been hesitant to allow such a campaign as projects like the Burlington Greenway and other major undertakings have taken priority in the past few years. The Cemetery Commissions current project, the replacement of the fence at Lakeview is in the planning and implementation process but will require approximately \$250,000 which is to be spread over the next 3 years. Without seeking outside donations and grants this project may drag out for far longer. Parks Director and Cemetery Superintendent Cindi Wight has been a great help and continues to assist the commission in navigating the headwinds of city procedures and processes.



Assistant Cemetery Superintendent Jeff Shedd and his staff do a great job maintaining our cemeteries in coordination with parks, but some important maintenance requires equipment not currently available from the parks department or to our staff. For example, Greenmount is in need of road regrading to make the cemetery accessible for vehicles and classroom visits. At over 200 years old, the paths are not designed for modern grading equipment making this project extremely challenging. The commission believes that Public Works would be helpful for this and small drainage and paving projects and hopes to work with them in the future.

In spite of the challenges, the future of city cemeteries looks bright. In the next year the commission will be starting the planning process to develop a 3-5 year plan for capital and preservation needs. In addition to the projects previously mentioned, a major goal of ours is to increase outreach with area schools and universities. We aim to inspire young members of the community to assist with historical research and headstone uprighting and repair as well as provide classroom instruction and foster further appreciation of our beautiful cemeteries and fascinating history.

Thank you for your consideration. We appreciate your assistance hope that the Cemetery Commission continues to be a valued city organization.

Sincerely,

Francis "Tag" Taginski
Cemetery Commission Chair

CC: Kurt Wright
Cindi Wight